

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

今日北京

BEIJING TODAY

HTTP://BEIJINGTODAY.COM.CN/

Baidu's Health Forums Go to the Top Bidder

The sale of a hemophilia support group has started a storm of anger on Tieba. **Page 4**



Int'l School a Bridge for China's 1%

A survey of Chinese education shows inequality begins early. **Page 5**



China a Step in Afghan Writer's Dream

Fleeing civil war in Kabul, Maneza Mohammad Ali arrived in China. **Page 6**



Festivals Tighten Tickets

With only 140,000 tickets available to the Longtanhu and Ditan temple fairs, 2016's Spring Festival celebration may be less of a 'people mountain people sea.'

Tickets are available online through February 4 or at the door from February 8 to 12. **Page 3**

Peking University Report Reveals Widening Inequality

BY KARENA HU

China's widening wealth gap is one of the country's fastest growing social concerns, according to the recently released 2015 China Livelihood Development Report.

The report series draws on research conducted by Peking University's China Family Panel Studies, which last year polled 14,960 families in 25 provinces about their living situation, problems and the country's social system.

At the center of this year's report is an investigation into the growing national income distribution gap. More than a third of China's property and wealth is

concentrated in the hands of the country's top 1 percent; the bottom 25 percent of all families control only 1 percent of China's wealth.

Moreover, during the past three decades, China's income Gini index soared from around 0.3 in the 1980s to 0.45 now – well above the warning level of 0.4.

In addition to income, the report also explores issues facing education and healthcare.

Unchangeable factors such as hukou and one's parents' educational background dramatically affect children's education opportunities. The public healthcare

system, which should play a leading role in shrinking the differences caused by the income gap, has been turned upside down to apply intense financial pressure to vulnerable families.

"No matter whether we look at social structure, class or a trans-regional picture, all evidence shows that inequality is growing," said Li Jianxin, the report's director and a professor at Peking University.

Li said the problems listed on the report require a fast remedy to prevent them from becoming a bottleneck to China's further social development. ■

(Karen Hu is an intern at Beijing Today.)

CHINESE STOCK INDEXES

SSE (Shanghai)

Close	Change	YTD
2,655.66	▼ 79.89 (2.92%)	-24.96%

SZSE (Shenzhen)

Close	Change	YTD
9,082.59	▼ 339.84 (3.61%)	-28.29%

HSI (Hong Kong)

Close	Change	YTD
19,195.83	▲ 142.38 (0.75%)	-12.41%

Accurate to market close on January 28, 2016



本系统提供境内活佛信息查询服务。

本系统提供境内活佛信息查询服务。

请先手机验证成功后即可输入任一项查询境内活佛信息，同一手机号一天限查5次。

手机号码： 发送

验证码： 提交

姓名： 法号：

身份证号： 活佛证号：

Photo by The Paper

‘Living-Buddha’ Database Aimed to Stop Impostors

BY YANG XIN

China launched an online authentication database of “living Buddhas” – holy men believed to be reincarnations of Tibetan lamas – in an attempt to root out swindlers on January 18.

The launch was celebrated at a ceremony hosted by the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) at the Guangji

Temple in Western Beijing.

The database includes the names, photos, religious names, monastic titles and other personal details of 870 verified “living Buddhas,” Xinhua reported. It is expected to expand as authorities continue their investigations.

The database is accessible on the website of the State Administration

for Religious Affairs, and netizens are allowed to search for ‘living Buddhas’ by birth name, religious name, temple, identity card number or “Living Buddha Card” number.

User must login in the database with their mobile number and are limited to making five searches per day.

“As a living Buddha, I feel genuinely happy about it,” said Drukhang Thubten Khedrup, the 7th Drukhang living Buddha and vice president of the BAC.

Drukhang Thubten Khedrup said the “living Buddhas” database was a move to promote transparency in the BAC and resolve reincarnation issues for living buddhas.

“In recent years, some people in Tibetan areas and other parts of China have posed as living Buddhas to show off and swindle others, harming the interests of the masses and damaging the reputation of Tibetan Buddhism and living Buddhas,” he said. “Now with the living Buddha database, people can quickly learn whether they are dealing with a real living Buddha.”

The tradition regarding living Buddhas as reincarnations of prominent Buddhist leaders emerged in the 1200s.

For years, there have been swindlers who pose as living Buddhas to gain money from believers. A search of “living Buddha” on Weibo, one of China’s most popular social media platforms, reveals more than 4,300 results. Only 170 of these accounts have been verified as genuine by Weibo’s operators.

Among Weibo’s 170 verified “living Buddhas,” some are still nowhere to be found in the newly launched database. ■

Chaoyang Police Train Older Informants to Identify Drugs

BY DIAO DIAO



Photo by news.163.com

Chaoyang police held a drug identification training class for the anonymous participants in the Chaoyang Qunzhong information network on January 19.

Zhang Xin, the chief of the district’s Drug Department took several boxes of different drugs to Hepingli Community to show the residents, most of whom were older.

Many of the senior women said they were surprised to learn that crystal meth looks essentially identical to the crystals of MSG found in most Chinese kitchens, and that ketamine resembles ordinary flour.

Zhang Xin told how to recognize other common drugs, such as MDMA, by appearance and smell.

MDMA is typically pressed into colorful tablets for sale at clubs. Most pills are decorated with patterns like butterflies or skulls. “MDMA has a special fragrance, and people can smell it even from a meter away,” Zhang said.

Meth looks like MSG but also has a slight fragrance. They crystals are typically shinier and harder. Meth will not melt in the hand, unlike MSG.

As for signs of drug addiction, Zhang advised residents to look for people who “yawn and have tears in their eyes, and lose their strength and have a yellow face” – symptoms of heroine addiction.

“Tweakers on the other hand are regularly high and can often be seen repeating one sentence or action. They also act paranoid,” he said.

Zhang said residents should also be aware of drug trade jargon such as liubing, meaning to take some meth. Residents may also pay special attention to people who buy large amounts of aluminum foil or straws.

Zhang said the Chaoyang Qunzhong helped in numerous drug arrests in 2015. The group reported more than 800 cases of suspected drug use to the police, resulting in arrests throughout Chaoyang district. ■

‘Opiate-Rich’ Seed Pods Cast Shadow Over Famous Food Street

BY YANG XIN

Ever wondered why you can’t get enough of Gujie’s amazing hotpot? According to China’s food investigators, it may be because they are addictive. At least if you believe the China Food and Drug Administration’s hype.

On January 21, the CFDA announced the results of its national investigation of restaurants. Five in Beijing were among the 25 venues blacklisted for having trace amounts of opiates in their spices and sauces, the *Beijing News* reported.

Huda Restaurant, one of the most popular restaurants on Gujie, was accused of spiking its roasted fish spices with opiates.

In an interview with *Beijing News*, Hu Ling, general manager of Huda Restaurant, said the incredibly slight amount of opiates detected in the spice was more likely the result of its shifty spices supplier. “A batch we made using spices from another supplier did not have this problem,” Hu said.

Baoheju Restaurant, also on Gujie, was accused of adding opiates to its spicy bullfrog sauce. It laid the blame on its former chef, surnamed Wu, who ordered the problematic spices.

Other restaurants in Beijing accused of selling food with opiates include Taoxiaji in Dongcheng district, Zhennanfu Snack in Fangshan district and Xie Shirong Fried Chicken in Xicheng district. The latter two



Photo by CFP

have been closed.

But poppy pods aren’t all that uncommon in Chinese restaurants, owing to a popular tale that their trace opiates boost the appeal of various dishes.

“The dried pods add flavor and freshness as well as accentuate the spiciness of the dishes,” a former Malatang vendor told *Beijing News*. “Three to five pods are

enough for one day. To avoid the CFDA’s spot checks, most restaurateurs dispose of the used pods separately.”

Although they are – strictly speaking – illegal, poppy pods are available online and at spice stores for 200 to 300 yuan for 500g. On Taobao, a cursory search of various homophones reveals dozens of stores selling poppy shell powder. ■



Photo by CFP

Training Schools Retain Professors in Spite of Ministry's Ban

BY DIAO DIAO

Schools across China started their art student enrollment tests this month. But this year, the Ministry of Education released a new notice emphasizing that professional art teachers are prohibited from training students to pass the test.

Beijing Youth Daily reporters secretly attended several training classes in the cap-

ital and found that many "master classes" priced between 30,000 and 100,000 yuan invited professional art teachers from the Central Academy of Drama, Beijing Film Academy, Beijing Dancing Academy and China Conservatory of Music to teach.

An organization called Fenghua Guoyun near China Conservatory of Music

said students who complete several courses are recommended to professors at the China Conservatory of Music for individual training.

Zhongying Yikao, a school located 100 meters from the gate of the Central Academy of Drama's Changping campus, told reporters that their exam prep classes will begin soon. The classes are designed for second-year high school students without basic skills in performance or art.

Students waiting outside Fenghua Guoyun said their lessons were taught by a professor surnamed Han who teaches Chinese dance at the China Conservatory of Music.

The official website of the art academies states that professors are not allowed to teach in outside training schools. While searching Youku.com, reporters found videos of four professors attending the opening ceremony of the training school's most recent semester, as well as clips of them teaching class.

An insider told *Beijing Youth Daily* that older organizations can get away with hiring famous professors if the founder talks to the school beforehand. However, many training schools lie about the qualifications of their teachers to win students.

Training classes are divided into levels that impart basic or intermediate skills and into sprint classes. Classes take two to six months to finish and each charges at least 10,000 yuan.

Students said they must also pay for independent instruction, which costs even more. ■



Shanghai Woman Uses App to Book Car, Gets Bus

A woman surnamed Chen who attempted to book a car using Kuaididi's Yihao Zhuan Che app to book a car was surprised when an off-duty city bus pulled up to take her to Caobao Toad Station.

The app listed the make of the bus as a "red SUV."

The driver said he felt driving the empty vehicle back to the bus station would be a waste of resources, so he accepted ridesharing requests that would allow him to pick up and drop off passengers along his usual route.

(Tencent News)

Men Pose as Women on WeChat to Boost Prostitution Business

Police broke up a prostitution gang in Guangzhou this month, arresting its leaders and fining them 300,000 yuan. The men used WeChat's "People Nearby" tool to locate guests inside Guangzhou hotels and arrange a sexual encounter.

The gang included 19 men, 11 of whom were in their 20s. Three of them men, Wang, Liu and Fu, traveled from as far away as the provinces of Hubei and Hunan to seek work in the city.

The actual prostitution service was subcontracted to a woman surnamed Ling who ran her own prostitution operation.

(Tencent News)

Wife Steals Family Car to Keep Husband Home for Chinese New Year

A man in Daqing surnamed Zhang was surprised to learn the thief who stole his car was actually his wife, Li.

"I knew where he kept his license, his ID card and his keys. Without those, there was no way he could make it home. He would have to spend Chinese New Year here with my parents," Li said.

Li said she had not expected that her husband would report the car stolen.

(Ifeng.com)

Temple Fairs to Limit Tickets Sales

BY DIAO DIAO

Considering their capacity and past visitor complaints, the Ditan and Longtanhu temple fairs have announced plans to limit their ticket sales each day.

Ditan Temple Fair will sell 150,000 tickets per day, and Longtanhu will sell 140,000. Forty percent of the tickets will be available for online reservation.

Wang Disheng, the director of

Dongcheng Landscaping Management Center, said this year is the first time the fairs have invited charitable participants to exhibit Beijing's intangible cultural heritage as well as several time-honored brands.

Ditan's fair will have 86 vendors and Longtanhu's 77, both a significant decrease from 2015. Popular vendors such as Bianyifang will have more than one booth.

Barbeque and game vendors will remain in the temple fairs. Game vendors require invitation and expert selection. Barbeques will be offered by Donglaihun, a long-established local restaurant.

The Ditan and Longtanhu temple fairs normally open for eight days. This year they will only be open for five days. Tickets will be available online from January 21 to February 4. ■



'Monkey with Tumors' Selected as Spring Festival Gala Mascot

BY YANG XIN

It didn't take long for the public to destroy "Kangkang," CCTV's new mascot for the the Year of the Monkey on January 21.

The sketch, a smiling icon painted in ink by contemporary artist Han Meilin, was initially charming. Mei is an exceptionally talented designer best known for her work on the Fuwa, the immensely popular mascots of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

With a round and hairy head and dominant colors of yellow, emerald green and rose, the sketch was deemed "cute" and "traditional" by most web users.

And then came the 3D version.

The 3D mascot based on those colorful ink prototypes was immediately mocked for looking like a traffic light with tumors. Online commentators noted it also resembled a "rotten kiwi" and called on the Monkey King to come "save his brother."

"I want to give up my Chinese horo-

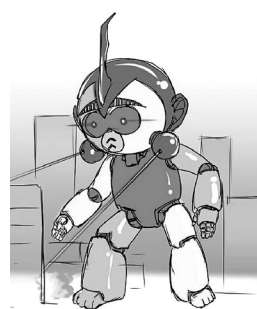
scope of the monkey," wrote one user. "I can't bear to see this anymore."

When verbal thrashings were not enough to convince CCTV to heal its ailing monkey, netizens took to 3D modeling software to design a new monkey that more closely resembles Han Meilin's original sketch. The fan work far exceeds CCTV's design in number of Likes.

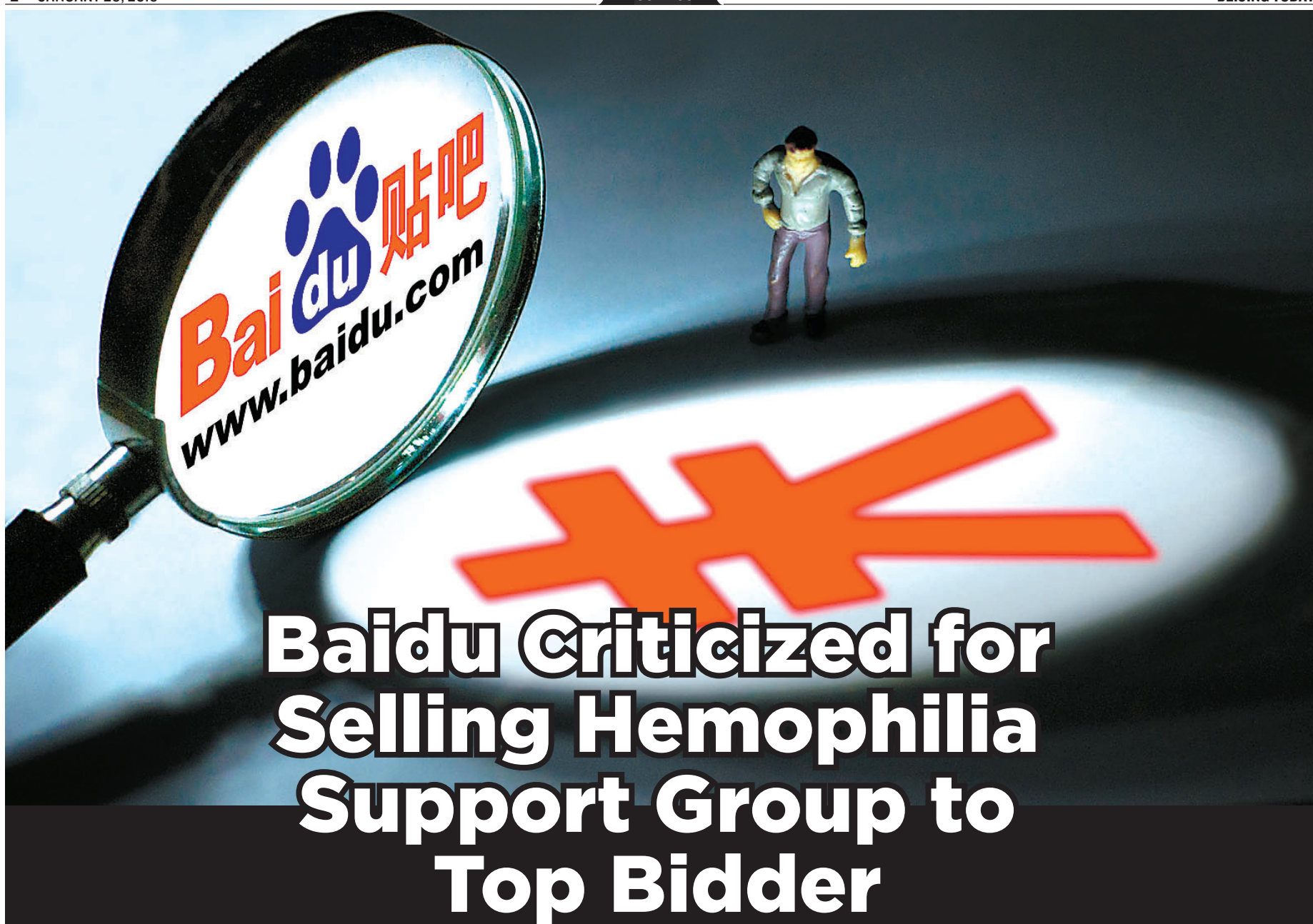
Last November, CCTV posted four sketches of the monkey on its official Weibo and called on netizens to vote for their favorite. At that time, "Kangkang" was not even an option.

This is the second year that CCTV has released a mascot for its Spring Festival Gala. Last year's Yangyang was not met with nearly as much scorn.

Since Yangyang appeared on only one night and then vanished into the ether, there is good reason to believe Kangkang will meet a similar fate. ■



Photos by weibo.cn



Baidu Criticized for Selling Hemophilia Support Group to Top Bidder

BY SHU PENGQIAN

Photo by CFP

2016 has not been kind to Internet giant Baidu. The company kicked off the new year with a public relations disaster when hemophiliacs revealed how Baidu sold their support community to the highest bidder.

Baidu's Tieba is one of China's largest discussion platforms, with hundreds of thousands of sub-forums devoted to entertainment, cooking, hobbies, fandom and support communities. The site has accumulated more than 1.5 billion registered accounts since its creation in 2003.

Quietly Leaked

The first whispers of the sale appeared online on January 9 and were promptly ignored as "fake news" by most Chinese media.

On January 10, Zhang Jianyong, a hemophiliac and member of the Tieba support group, urged readers to examine the case in greater depth in an article published under the name "Mayi Cai."

The Tieba support group, Zhang said, was instrumental in allowing China's hemophiliacs and relatives to air their frustrations over the disease and share their experiences about treatment. The volunteers on its moderation team worked diligently to delete fraudulent messages and fake advertisements while promoting useful information to

the top of the board, he said.

But Zhang said the moderators were surprised when a number of useful articles were suddenly purged from the board. Several days later, Zhang and the other moderators were stripped of their powers and forbidden to post new information to the support board.

In their place was a new moderator, a Tieba user named "Hemophilia Expert."

In a notice on January 11, Hemophilia Expert said he had formed a team of consultants and was prepared to answer any questions about hemophilia on the board. He emphasized that "Baidu entrusted to him" this role.

Netizens unmasked the majority of his "consultants" as employees of a medical institution in Xi'an, Shaanxi province. Others included members who had been banned by the old moderation team, such as "Liu Shaanxi," who fraudulently claimed to be a professor at the Shaanxi Medical Research Institute of Hemophilia in April 2014.

If the allegations are true, this would not be the first time Baidu sold off one of its Tieba communities to corporate interests.

In a response on the question and answer site Zhihu, an insider writing under the handle "ytytytyt" said more than 40 percent of Tieba's most popular forums were sold to business interests. These include support groups for

other diseases such as liver disease and hypertension.

Tieba Operating System

While it's hard to defend Baidu's actions as moral, they are reasonable from a business perspective. Highly focused online communities are of immense commercial value.

Each Tieba community is a data gold mine, especially since Tieba user accounts are tied to greater Baidu accounts that can be used for analysing users' habits and potential demands.

The forums also represent a strategic component that Baidu uses to defend its weak position in the social media market, where it is traditionally overshadowed by its competitors Sina and Tencent.

Baidu did not attempt to capitalize on its Tieba platform before 2014. During that time, Tieba represented a comparatively free online socializing platform where moderation was in the hands of a community's most productive members. Moderation privileges were granted to members who logged in every day and who posted the most useful articles.

That's not to say there was no grey economy. There were frequent cases of companies paying moderators of popular boards to delete negative articles or post advertisements in place of

normal discussion.

Baidu's move to commercialize Tieba resulted in all forums being reclassified as "enterprise" or "interest" based. Moderation control of enterprise forums is directly sold to companies since they are essentially advertising platforms. For interest-based forums, moderation goes to the highest bidder.

Critics have likened the new Tieba to an advertising platform for the rich rather than a socializing platform for regular users.

The exodus of those users could spell trouble for Baidu – Tieba's strong userbase is what makes it a social media powerhouse, as well as a desirable target for advertisers.

Critics say the move to sell moderation to commercial agencies puts Baidu's reputation at risk and gives many users the impression that the company "will do anything for money." Even for users open to the idea of commercialization, selling moderation control of a support group for people with a serious disease crosses a line.

Baidu has announced plans to revoke the access of the hemophilia forum moderator it appointed and transfer control to the Hemophilia Home of China, a non-profit organization. The company said it would suspend attempts to sell control of its other forums related to medical ailments. ■



Growing Wealth Prompts China to Examine International Ed

BY WANG YAN

A report by Beijing Normal University found that a third of China's wealth is in the hands of the country's top 1 percent. The bottom 25 percent together control only 1 percent of the country's wealth.

In addition to pointing out that staggering wealth gap, the report also honed in on how China's elites and masses enjoy radically different access to healthcare and education.

According to the report, the education gap is most pronounced in urban-rural and east-west comparisons. Further, it found that while the education gap was relatively small for people born in the 1960s, it accelerated rapidly with the country's market reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. Birthplace, hukou status and wealth were the primary determining factors for education outcomes.

While regional disadvantages have persisted for generations, such sweeping differences in education outcomes within a single location are a relatively new phenomenon.

In Beijing, students who don't have local hukou cannot attend public school. Although wealthy families who lack a hukou can choose to pay for international school, children from poor families with no Beijing ties are cut off from their studies.

International Schools

China had 597 international schools as of 2015, surpassing the United Arab Emirates to become the country with the most international schools.

Wu Yue, CEO of Xinxueshuo.com, told *The Paper* that there are mainly three types of international schools in China: ones for expats' children, private schools and international programs set up by public schools.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education estimated there were 116 schools for expats. A UK research center said China had 236,400 students studying at international schools in 2015.

However, Fan Shengwu, headmaster of one of the private international schools in Beijing, told Sina Education that the international education industry in China is hard to measure.

"Different schools have different entrance requirements. International education in China is not mature. They need to shake off the traditional teaching method, but for cultural reasons most foreign methods cannot be directly applied to Chinese students and families. As far as I am concerned, the international schools in Beijing vary greatly in their education quality, and the industry needs more management," Fan said.

For private international schools and

For students who choose to join an international school, the main goal is to get admitted to a prestigious foreign university. Most international schools in China offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and some provide ALevel, IGCSE or International Baccalaureate (IB) lessons.

International Programs

Merely providing more choices for students who can afford them would not be news. But Chinese education experts argue that opening international programs inside a public school will divert public education resources to wealthy families.

In 2013, the Chinese government tightened its control of public schools' international programs. In the following year, Beijing announced it would stop approving new international programs for public schools. Shanghai also stated its public schools would separate their international programs from the main campus.

Chen Zhiwen, editor-in-chief of *China Education Online*, said in a seminar that it is necessary to separate international programs from public schools because they make education less fair and few schools can really manage an international education program.

Shi Guopeng, headmaster of Beijing No. 4 Middle School, was the first headmaster to launch an international program within a public high school.

"Our school is planning to move its international programs to another campus," Shi told *The Paper*. "The International program thrives better within the private system."

Education Fairness

How to balance private and public education has been a problem for many Western countries. But China has only been involved in the balancing act for 15 years.

The trend is not hard to predict. Students who have grown up in the private education system have different skills, outlooks and friends compare their peers who attended the public system. And when comparing students who received an education in a first-tier private school compared to a rural public school, the gap is even greater.

The UK is well-known for its private education system. In 2014, the country published a report suggesting that only 7 percent of its population attended private school. That 7 percent accounts for 71 percent of the country's senior judges, 62 percent of its senior armed forces officers, 55 percent of Whitehall's permanent secretaries and half of the House of Lords.

Peter Tait, the former headmaster of a private boarding school in England and columnist, wrote that "old schools links, favored internships and the bias of employers and universities" caused this phenomenon in the UK.

Although China has yet to reach such a state, the increasing gap between rich and poor bodes ill for the country's equality and President Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream."

"The Chinese dream is the dream of the people. It needs people to realize it, and it also has to benefit the people," Xi said at one political gathering.

If the Chinese government is indeed the government of a socialist country, it may be time to put forward some measures to create a relatively fair playing field where all people can achieve their personal dreams and individual success. ■



CFP Photos

international programs run by public high schools, not only do their requirements and quality vary – so does their tuition.

Keystone Academy, the most expensive private international school in Beijing, costs around 350,000 yuan a year. Other private schools cost 250,000 to 300,000 yuan per year. International programs run by public high schools cost between 70,000 and 200,000 yuan.

Afghan Student, Writer Sees China as a Step Toward her Dream

BY SIMINA MISTREANU



Photos courtesy of Maneza Mohammad Ali

Maneza Mohammad Ali has no clear memories of Afghanistan. Her family, including her parents, three younger brothers and grandparents, left Kabul in 1992, shortly after the start of the country's civil war. Maneza was 3 years old.

They resettled in Islamabad, Pakistan, where Maneza started school. Her father, a businessman, began doing business in China, and about nine years later the family relocated again, this time to the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

The transition to China was more difficult, Maneza recalls. The family had left her grandparents behind, in Pakistan; Chinese culture and language seemed very foreign, and they didn't like the food. The children were homeschooled for about a year, and then the family moved again, to Beijing.

Today, Maneza is a cosmopolitan young woman with global ambitions. She graduated with a master's degree in international politics and economics from Peking University. She teaches English and writes political and economic analyses on China and the Middle East for think tanks. She's active in various organizations for professional women.

For how difficult she found it to learn the language at first, now Mandarin is the main language in which she thinks and expresses herself, along with English and Farsi. She loves Chinese food and has surrounded herself with friends.

"I'm almost half-Chinese," she says.

Yet she sees China as just a stop along the way to fulfilling her dream, which is anchored outside of the country.

An Education

When she started school in Beijing, her limited Chinese experience sent Maneza from seventh grade back to third grade. She was the oldest and loneliest among her colleagues. But she focused on her studies. During breaks, she would pay a classmate 1 yuan to teach her more Chinese words. The girl would teach her a few words, then run away with the money to buy snacks.

As she learned Chinese, Maneza started skipping grades and ended up graduating from high school at a normal age. But she doesn't feel like she got the most out of her education. She says teachers and colleagues are friendly and helpful to foreign students, but they have lower expectations than from Chinese students.

"They thought I came here only to learn Chinese, but I didn't," she says. "I came here to get a normal education, just like the others. That's a very big problem: When a foreigner comes to China to study, their teacher only focuses on their Chinese. If you don't do good work in other subjects, they don't care. They just pass you."

Similarly, when she attended university at China Foreign Affairs University, she was surprised to learn the school cancelled its English classes for foreign students. Most of her colleagues were there to improve their Chinese, she was told.

China had 377,000 international students enrolled in its universities in 2014, the year Maneza graduated from her master's pro-



gram, according to China Scholarship Council. That's more than triple the number in 2004, reflecting both an increased interest in Chinese studies and an opening of the universities to international students.

The master's program at Peking University was the first time Maneza felt pushed in her studies, outside of studying the language. Her colleagues were top students from around the world, who were interested in foreign affairs, cultures and religions.

The Good, the Bad

One of the best things about Chinese society is that it accepts all cultures, nationalities and religions, Maneza says.

"My friends know I'm a Muslim, and I don't eat pork. They'll never offend you for this," she says. "They know I don't drink, and they will never offend you to push you to drink. In 15 years in China, I have never experienced any threat or offense. I used to wear hijab. People were just saying, 'Aren't you hot?' But they weren't saying, 'Oh, she's a Muslim. Oh wow! Extremist, terrorist!' They're not going to say that."

During grad school, Maneza also learned to distance herself emotionally from political conversations. This allowed her and her colleagues who have different backgrounds to exchange ideas and become friends.

But though she has close friends who are Chinese, she still has a hard time digesting the typical Chinese *guanxi* network. She doesn't feel comfortable maintaining relationships "for profit" and doesn't like the working environment in Chinese companies, where appearances and obedience are valued more than results.

Maneza thinks she needs to continue to develop outside of China. Politics, her passion, is a sensitive topic here. And she's also looking for a place to belong.

"To be honest, I'm really tired," she says. "Although I can communicate with foreigners more easily than with Afghans, my heart is really tired being an outsider. I don't feel at home here."

The Dream

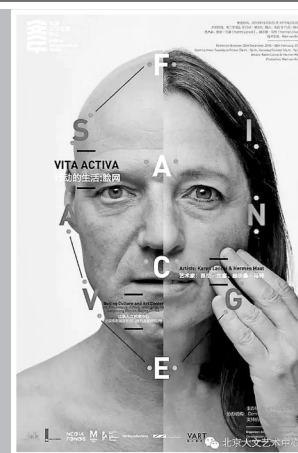
Maneza's dream is to eventually go back to Afghanistan and serve her people – *wei renmin fuwu*, to use the Chinese phrase.

She is considering going to study in the US, where she wants to learn more about Afghanistan politics and perfect her language skills.

"I work hard... I don't know, maybe it's not realistic," she says. "Some people say it's not realistic, especially my family because Afghanistan is still at war, security issues are getting worse, but I don't know. Since I was a little girl I had that dream: I work hard, I study hard, I go back to that country." ■

China's International Students

- China had 377,000 international students enrolled in its universities in 2014, according to the International Institute of Education.
- Of those, 16.7 percent came from South Korea, 6.4 percent from the US and 5.6 percent from Thailand.
- Most students (55.3 percent) come to China to study humanities. Business and management (14.5 percent) and health (13.8 percent) are the next most popular majors.
- 55.6 percent of China's international students are studying abroad, thus are not pursuing a degree in China; 30.9 percent are pursuing bachelor's degrees; and 12.7 percent are pursuing post-graduate degrees.
- The number of international students in China has grown by 240 percent from 2004 to 2014.



Photos by Beijing Culture and Art Center



Saving Face Exhibition Creates Composed Identities

BY SIMINA MISTREANU

The Beijing Culture and Art Center (BCAC) is announcing the exhibition BCAC Open Display VITA ACTIVA: Saving Face, which opened December 26.

The exhibition aims to establish a “digital-synesthetic trust system” through video and scanning technologies and “caressing one’s self.”

Through their art installations, Dutch artists Karen Lancel and Hermen Maat explore people’s emotional and social tensions related to trust, privacy and visibility.

“When we meet, face-to-face connection, body language and touch are core components for reciprocity and trust... However, these sensory experiences are increasingly replaced by identity scanning technologies. We are faced with the paradox of ‘the higher the surveillance, the lower the trust.’ How do we experience our bodies and identities, technically being measured and turned into fixated, controllable ‘products?’” the artists said.

Saving Face emerged from artistic research conducted as part of Lancel’s

Ph.D trajectory at Delft University of Technology. Lancel and Maat deconstruct automated control technologies such as surveillance, social media and brain-computer interfaces and connect them with human acts of intimacy, sensory and aesthetic perception to inspire new socio-technical ecosystems.

As part of their art installation, interactive city sculptures with cameras connected to their screens are installed. The cameras are equipped with face-recognition technology. People standing in front of the sculpture are invited to caress their face, which helps the camera to “paint” their portrait on a screen. At the same time as it emerges, the portrait blends with those of previous visitors, “co-creating transparent, untraceable, fluid, networked identities,” the artists said.

Each composed identity is then saved in a user generated database and printed as a Saving Face Passport. The composed identities are projected onto screens in public spaces such as museum halls and city squares, thus “traveling” to various geographic and cultural contexts. ■

Beijing Culture and Art Center

⌚ 10 am-5 pm, through February 28

📍 3 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng

✉ info@bcac.org.cn



BY YANG XIN

From Russian with Love, a joint art exhibition of Russian contemporary paintings, opened at the Russian Cultural Center on January 21.

The two-week exhibition, consisting of 40 or more representative pieces by renowned Russian artists, such as Boris Chuprov, Evgeny Pavlovich and Olga Melnikova, arrived in Beijing with the support of the Russian Cultural Center in Beijing and the Art Without Boundaries Association.

Exhibited works share several common characteristics and exemplify Russian artistic perspectives. Each shows the artists’ love of their motherlands and of Russia’s natural landscapes and life scenes.

Seven participating artists have traveled from Moscow to Beijing to meet local

Art Exhibition Brings Russia’s Best to Beijing

viewers at the Russian Cultural Center.

Boris Chuprov, whose works are collected by renowned Russian museums such as the Museum of the Great Patriotic War and many overseas personal collectors, and Evgeny Pavlovich, the 78-year-old artist who has been working for a Moscow art foundation since 1965, attended the opening ceremony and guided audiences through the exhibition.

As a comprehensive exhibition of Russian art, From Russian with Love overcame significant logistical difficulties to bring the country’s art abroad.

China, with its growing art market and everlasting enthusiasm for contemporary Russian art, is a promising venue for Russian galleries and art institutions to promote domestic art and artists.

The Russian Cultural Center in Beijing said it is planning more events to bridge Russian and Chinese art and push forward Sino-Russian cultural exchange. ■



Photos by Drogen News Russia

Russian Cultural Center

⌚ 10 am-7 pm, through February 2

📍 9 (NAGA), Building 2, Dongzhimennei Street, Dongcheng

☎ (010)8406 0224



Spend Spring Festival at Youth Camp



It's only one more week until Spring Festival, China's most important holiday. During the holiday break, most families gather with extended relatives and pay formal visits to close friends and other connections.

But with a rising standard of living comes the search for something more. Many young people now take advantage of the break to travel with their family.

For Beijingers seeking a local destination that will be free of crowds, Beijing Youth Camp International (BYCI) offers an interesting possibility.

BYCI was founded in 2013 to cultivate youths from home and abroad and promote international cultural exchange. Today, BYCI has five branches across the city.

BYCI builds on the knowledge of foreign youth camps together with the support of domestic youth organizations and non-profit groups. It provides youths with outdoor and indoor activities and equipments, which build confidence and leadership skills.

Themed rooms are some of BYCI's unique indoor activities, with themes as diverse as childhood, knitting, baking, card motels and planting.

The rooms offer visitors the chance to find happiness in working with their hands and build valuable knowledge about first-aid treatment and emergency management.

BYCI is also a good place to learn more about Chinese folk art.

For thousands of years, Chinese folk art has been going through a cyclic process of reform and development to reach its present state. At BYCI, visitors can learn more about Chinese folk arts and attempt to practice them on their own. Some classes include rope knitting, flower arrangement, woodworking, Chinese tea ceremonies and Peking opera makeup.

BYCI's outdoor activities include a three-legged race, two-man comic show, CounterStrike-themed paintball and other games. New facilities for archery tag and racing are also under construction.

Archery tag was invented by Jack Johnson, an American. Equipped with bow and arrow, two teams shoot toward each other. The arrows are made of special materials to keep participants safe.

BYCI is ready to welcome new guests during the Spring Festival holiday. ■

By Shu Pengqian

